



U of MN Swine Extension Update



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1. New Educational Series, "PorkBridge", for Grow-Finish Swine Producers

Don't have a lot of time to attend a seminar or conference, but still interested in gaining knowledge in grow-finish pork production? A new educational series, entitled "PorkBridge", allows pork production owners, managers and employees in Nebraska, Iowa, Minnesota and South Dakota to increase knowledge and skills in grow-finish production without having to leave home or the farm.

Offered as a two-state pilot program to a limited audience last year in Ohio and Nebraska, the program has been expanded to provide desired information to more people involved in pork production. The program combines electronic information viewed on computer with live oral presentations via phone by experts in the topic areas. The week before each session, subscribers will receive a CD containing that session's topic-specific presentation, along with a short homework assignment and

information on accessing the live speaker presentation. Each session is one hour in length, beginning either at noon or 7 p.m. Session times will be filled on a first-come, first-filled basis.

Cost for participating in this subscription-only series is \$125, which covers materials and phone calls for all six sessions. Multiple individuals can participate at a site, thereby reducing cost per person. The program runs from December 2005 through October 2006. Session dates, speakers, their university affiliations and topics are as follows.

- Dec. 8, 2005 Mike Brumm, University of Nebraska, Impact of out-of-feed events and water restrictions on grow-finish performance
- Feb. 9, 2006 Locke Karriker, Iowa State University, The basics of on-farm necropsy
- April 6, 2006 Rick Stowell, University of Nebraska, The basics of ventilation controllers
- June 1, 2006 Robert Thaler, South Dakota State University, Keeping pigs eating in hot weather
- Aug. 3, 2006 Alex Ramirez, Iowa State University, The basics of grow-finish biosecurity
- Oct. 5, 2006 Lee Johnston, University of Minnesota, Animal welfare considerations in grow-finish facilities

Mark Whitney of the University of Minnesota is the series leader and will be the moderator for all sessions. Those interested in registering or learning more about the program can access material at the U of MN Extension website at www.extension.umn.edu/swine or contact Mark Whitney at (507) 389-5541 or whitn007@umn.edu.

2. Applications Available for Livestock Equipment Loan Program

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) Rural Finance Authority (RFA) is now accepting applications for the Livestock Equipment Pilot Loan program. The application process began August 15. With preference given to applicants who have farmed less than 10 years, the pilot program will allow livestock producers to tap into existing RFA funds to help finance livestock equipment purchases. An applicant must be a resident of Minnesota or an entity qualified under the corporate farm law. The applicant must also be the principal operator of a livestock farm.

The RFA will purchase 45 percent of the qualifying loan up to \$40,000 with loans amortized up to seven years. Loans can be written for equipment for animal housing, feeding, milk production and waste management. The pilot loan program is not intended for refinancing purposes, and is one of the many financing tools administered by the RFA. The interest rate on the pilot program is not to exceed 3 percent with a payment option of interest only for the first two years of the loan.

For more information about the pilot loan program, contact the MDA's Gary Blahosky at 651-296-4985 or go to the MDA website at www.mda.state.mn.us.

3. Swine Welfare Assurance Program Continues to Grow

After just one year, the Pork Checkoff's Swine Welfare Assurance ProgramSM (SWAPSM) is already making a difference in the U.S. pork industry. Since its debut in August 2003, producers have implemented the program in all types and sizes of swine operations across the country. "Sometimes you don't notice potential problems until you actually look for them," says a pork producer from Michigan. "SWAP was able to help my operation identify animal care principles that could be improved and that has now helped us to better our overall productivity."

SWAP is the first objective and voluntary on farm program to measure swine welfare. This educational assessment allows producers to evaluate and benchmark the care and welfare of their animals and address any concerns in a scientifically sound manner. The program can be implemented within any type or size of production system. Markets may eventually require assurances of animal welfare. Communications with fast food chains and retailers indicate that responsibility for such guarantees may be transferred back to the producer. SWAP can help producers answer these questions should they arise.

Not only can SWAP empower producers to demonstrate their commitment to swine welfare to their customers, many producers have found the program extremely useful in offering improvements to their production practices. "Pork producers who have participated in SWAP are realizing the value of the program," said Erik Risa, manager of certification programs for the Pork Checkoff. "SWAP is serving as a way for them to showcase their commitment to swine welfare whilst continually evaluating their production practices."

Such changes can lead to improved productivity and efficiencies for producers. Since SWAP was designed with practical guidelines, pork producers are using the program as a way to identify welfare issues before they become production problems. One producer from Minnesota said, "The Swine Welfare Assurance program has improved our operation's management practices in several areas. One area that we were initially skeptical of, but has proven quite valuable, is record keeping. Through improved daily animal observations, all daily caretakers have become more accountable. Our overall animal husbandry skills have been enhanced."

To participate in SWAP, producers review educational materials regarding welfare issues and then arrange for an assessment of their production site by a Certified SWAP Educator to be conducted. The site can then be registered with the Pork Checkoff as a SWAP Assessed site for a period of up to three years. To find a Certified SWAP Educator near you and for more information about SWAP, visit www.porkboard.org/SWAPHome or call the Pork Checkoff Service Center at 800-456-PORK. Certified SWAP assessors are available through the University of Minnesota Swine Extension team.

4. The Challenges of Delivering and Explaining Pig Welfare

Pig welfare has two distinct challenges. The first is, of course, using the capabilities and resources that we have, and using them in a cogent and responsible manner when we care for the pigs. This aspect of pig production is integral to the regular decision-making that goes on in all aspects of pork production, whether it be veterinary care, marketing, nutrition and the day to day decisions of stock persons. The second challenge with welfare is in relating and discussing this care of animals to a suspicious public. For animal agriculture, the criticisms often leveled against common rearing practices have created challenges to not only reassessing these practices but also the relationship of animal owners with society.

To read the full text of this article, access the U of MN Swine Extension website at: www.extension.umn.edu/swine.

5. Professional Swine Managers Conference Coming to Mankato

Managers and owners of swine breeding and farrowing units, mark you calendars for a conference coming up in Mankato, MN on November 17 and 18, 2005. Sponsored by the National Pork Board and University of Minnesota Extension Service, the 2-day event will provide information on a variety of topics from speakers throughout the United States. Topics include:

- Gilt Pool Management
- Induction & Control of Estrus
- The Electrical Network of a Livestock Farm
- Ventilation Management
- Biosecurity (sanitation)
- Feeding Management during Gestation
- Employee Management & Training
- Troubleshooting: Farrowing Rate & Litter Size
- Factors Affecting Sow Longevity
- How to Post Pigs
- Emerging/Re-emerging Disease Problems
- Preparing for a Welfare Evaluation

Plans are to hold the conference at the downtown Holiday Inn. More details concerning registration, program agenda, etc... will be forthcoming in the near future.

6. 2005 Leman Swine Conference to be held Sept 17-20 in St. Paul

The annual Leman Swine Conference is scheduled for September 17-20 and will be held at the St. Paul RiverCenter. This conference is considered one of the premier educational experiences focused on the health and production of swine. There will be

over 90 speakers from around the world, each an authority in their respective fields of study. As well, we expect over 700 registrants, providing plenty of opportunity to share experiences and meet new people.

The preconference workshops begin on Saturday and include opportunities to improve your diagnostics skills, study ventilation, analysis of production and financial data, design and conduct of field trials and disease eradication. As well, the Kansas State nutrition group will present their latest information on feeding, and Dr. George Foxcroft, U of Alberta Swine Research Technology Center, will present information on how to developing gilts, breeding them and retaining them in the herd.

Four keynote speakers make up the main program. Dr. Roger Campbell, AusGene International, will present research he has conducted encompassing both the fundamental and the practical aspects of growth and development in pigs and poultry. Mr Don Butler, Murphy-Brown, LLC, will speak on the importance of third party verification in maintaining credible environmental, animal welfare and other management systems. Dr. Joe Connor, Carthage Veterinary Service, will provide information on biosecurity and boar studs. Dr. Marguerite Pappaioanou, U of MN School of Public Health, will speak on "Historical, new and reemerging links between human and animal health."

Veterinarians, swine industry personnel, animal scientists, academia, and producers alike will find the program valuable to their operations and interests. For more information on the Leman Swine Conference and/or how to register, visit the conference website at <http://www.cvm.umn.edu/outreach/events/adl/home.html>.

7. 66th Annual MN Nutrition Conference to be held Sept 20-21 in St. Paul

The 66th annual Minnesota Nutrition Conference is scheduled Sept. 20-21, 2005 at the Holiday Inn St. Paul/East. The conference is recognized as an important forum for the animal nutrition industry. Local, national, and international animal nutritionists will gather to learn about the current, innovative research at universities, in industry, and at government centers. This year's conference features dairy, beef, swine and poultry nutrition. Conference highlights will include:

- Renewable fuels and feed ingredients--the connection
- Corn genetics and animal nutrition
- Utilization of corn co-products
- Diet formulation for the future
- Net energy system for pigs
- Utilization of peptides for non-ruminants
- Effective fiber in dairy diets

A preconference symposium on the "Future of corn in animal feeds," is scheduled Sept. 20, from 8:30 a.m.-noon. It's sponsored by the Minnesota Corn Growers Association. For registration information, see <http://www.cce.umn.edu/conferences/mnnutrition>.

8. Interested in Swine Training Program Workshops or Specialized Training Courses?

Dates and locations for upcoming Swine Training Program workshops have been set for the upcoming year. The program, sponsored by the MN Pork Board and U of MN Extension Service, involves 2-day intensive training workshops on various phases and aspects of modern pork production. Educators from the U of MN, along with experts from the swine industry, provide program content and delivery, allowing for both classroom and hands-on learning experiences, while encouraging extensive discussion of timely subjects or issues. More detailed information on individual courses are available at www.mnpork.org and www.extension.umn.edu/swine.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Workshop</u>	<u>Location</u>
July 14-15, 2005	Breeding & Gestation Mgmt	Waseca
Sept 8-9, 2005	Nursery Management	Morris
Dec 1-2, 2005	Artificial Insemination	Waseca
Feb 9-10, 2006	Wean to Finish Management	Morris
Feb 16-17, 2006	Wean to Finish Management	Waseca
April 13-14, 2006	Farrowing Management	Waseca

The U of MN Swine Team is also available to provide assistance or instruction for your next training session. Whether you desire certification in National Pork Board programs such as Swine Welfare Assurance Program (SWAP), Trucker Quality Assurance (TQA), Pork Quality Assurance (POA), or would like instruction in a specialized phase of production, timely topic, or information on new technology and research results, the Swine Team may be able to help. It is our goal to bring University research to the Minnesota Pork Industry, ensuring the continued sustainability and competitiveness of producers and allied industry. Periodically check our events calendar on the U of MN Swine Extension website (www.extension.umn.edu) for upcoming workshops and seminars, or contact Dr. Mark Whitney, Swine Extension Specialist, to arrange for a specific or specialized program at (507) 389-5541.

For more information:

Please email or call me if I can be of assistance:

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